

Letters to The Times

Move on Cuba Queried

Part Attributed to C.I.A. Called
Disgraceful if True

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

Premier Fidel Castro has recently charged that a ship called the Rex, based in West Palm Beach but flying the Nicaraguan flag, is being used by the United States Central Intelligence Agency for making raids on Cuba. The news item, carried in The Times of Nov. 1, was accompanied by a photograph of the Rex at its Palm Beach pier. Evidence presented in the dispatch, together with the failure of the President or of any United States agency to deny the charge, lends a considerable degree of verisimilitude to Castro's statement.

If, indeed, the charge is true, it should cause every self-respecting American citizen to hang his head in shame. The spectacle of a great nation like the United States, which prates so frequently about the sanctity of treaties, resorting to such underhanded practices (in outright violation of the U.N. Charter as well as the Charter of the Organization of American States) to persecute vindictively a tiny nation which could not possibly (especially since the removal of the Russian missile sites) pose a military threat to the United States, merely because it has a form of government abhorrent to us, is disgraceful, to put it mildly. Is this really the image we wish to present to the world?

Oppression Doubted

For us to pretend, as we do, that the Cuban people are having Communists rammed down their throats by a wicked tyrant is ridiculous in the light of such little information as has leaked out of Cuba, despite the strenuous efforts of our State Department to prevent it, and despite its refusal to permit Americans to visit Cuba to see for themselves what the situation is.

It is well known, for example, that Castro moves about among his people with the greatest freedom and without the necessity of being protected by bullet-proof plate glass. Is this the way of oppressors? Was Batista able to do this?

What right, one may ask, does the C.I.A. have to be making attacks without the permission of the American people on a nation with whom we are technically at peace? It is such an inglorious conclusion.

Official, the President, can determine for the whole American people whether they shall have war or peace, as President Truman did in the Korean incident. Are we now to entrust this power, which in the atomic age can literally mean life or death for the whole human race, to a group of cloak-and-dagger operatives who are not ever elected and are, therefore, in no sense politically responsible to the American people?

Controlling Policy

Unless the American people regain greater control of their own foreign policy, almost anything can happen. One of the very first steps in that direction should be to strip the C.I.A. immediately of all operational and policy-making powers and confine it to its original function--namely, the gathering of information.

Action on the basis of such information should be decided upon by a politically responsible body, which at least has some valid reason to feel that it reflects the views of a majority of American citizens, and should be taken, if necessary, by an organization more proficient in the art of warfare than that which guided the Bay of Pigs invasion to such an inglorious conclusion.

HAROLD W. THATCHER

Forty Fort, P.A., Nov. 1, 1963.